
Why I Write About The Future

Doomsdays, 2012, And The *Real* “Future Shock”

Butterfly Language - September 20, 2016



I. 1999

As a small child, I was utterly *terrified* of the future. A lot of this fear came from the "doomsday" vogue of the mid-to-late 70s, in which the name of French physician and occultist Nostradamus was dropped a lot—as well as the "end of the world" date of 1999.

It was pretty damn convenient for a lot of seers, mystics, and preachers to focus on 1999, as not only was it right before the change of the millennium, but if they started in the Seventies it gave them a lot of time for fundraising before they were possibly found out as charlatans.

But regardless, such dire predictions made me wet the bed and absolutely dread The Future. Understandably, even as an adult counting down to Y2K was filled with anxiety. On New Year's Eve, I literally followed...every...last...*minute*...

Wait, *we're still here*? No glitch made the nukes go off? Infrastructure still running OK? I can still watch *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* on Thursday nights?

Something very strange happened to me when the year changed to 2000 and nothing "happened." I felt...*disappointed*? (A little bit?)

It was just that I had dreaded 1999 for so *long*, that when it came and went and the world was still here, I felt "cheated." I felt "taken for a ride." And then I actually picked up a copy of the "prophecies" of Nostradamus and read them and was like...*what WAS this crap*? It was just like some disjointed poetry or something. How did *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* and *In Search Of* manage to base whole terrifying segments on this vague shit?

The future was "here." And it was pretty much the same damn thing, plus me being a little bit older and the existence of fan-fiction websites.



II. 2001

And so then 2000 came and went and we were on 2001, which was of course the titular year of Stanley Kubrick's (and, of course, Arthur C. Clarke's) science fiction masterpiece.

And so now, we were in The Future. And it was no big deal...no Monolith, no space-baby, not even a convincing Hal.



I had not only been afraid of the The Future all those years for nothing, but *The Jetsons* seemed kind of like bullocks now too.

Then 9/11 happened, and as I watched the second tower collapse on the big monitor in my work's conference room, I saw...it.

The Future.

But it wasn't The Future as predicted in an obscure 16th century book of prose, or blasted out of the mouth of a fire-and-brimstone preacher.

It was The Future as an out-of-nowhere, "black swan" event. (though certainly the writings of Nostradamus and others were "retrofitted" to address it by the "doomsday" crowd)

And I knew intuitively that *we*—America, my generation, the next generation, the world—would be irrevocably impacted by one event for a long long time, in ways we couldn't even conceive of yet.

Having a "legit" doomsday-like event happen also gave "new life" to the doomsday predictors, who latched on to yet another key year to build their cults and empires on:

III. 2012

I was all "futured out" by 2012, but I still read a few of the zillions of "2012 Prophecy" books like Daniel Pinchbeck's *2012: The Return Of Quetzalcoatl*. The Mayans had supposedly "predicted" a cataclysmic, momentous epoch-shattering change for humankind by December 21, 2012—but I was too busy and jaded to really "care." It was all just another vehicle to sell products and gain clicks on websites. I was part of the media at that point. I knew the drill.

But while no epic event happened by the end of 2012, I had inexplicably begun to become utterly obsessed with the Future.

All at once, I felt possessed with this "need" to read as much Futurist material as I could get my hands on.

Perhaps all the 2012 propaganda had gotten to me. Perhaps the community and genre I had been surrounded with for the past six years—comic books, popular science-fiction, "geek" culture—seemed so equally obsessed with contemplating its own belly-button and staying in a perfectly-preserved, mint-condition version of their childhoods.

But I began to read everything from Ray Kurzweil to H.G. Wells, Timothy Leary to Terence McKenna. I began to read actual articles on science and technology—topics I had very little interest in previously.

More than anything, I started to...*estimate* a lot. I continually estimated—guessed, based on a number of knowable factors—what the future would be like for *any* scenario. It could be 20 years from now or two years from now. I just had this insatiable drive to *know*.

I wondered if maybe there was some sort of "significance" to 2012, but not in the way we were "sold" it.



IV. "You Are Here"

I believe many of these clairvoyants, "prophets," shamans, and etc. were right about one thing, and it's the same thing many of the scientists, philosophers, and respected "thinkers" of the past century have believed.

This time—where we are, in the epicenter—is IT.



We humans have developed scary-quickly within a relatively short amount of time; our emotions/ethics perhaps not keeping up as fast with the technology we unleash.

We have the means to destroy all life on Earth. Earth itself is rather overdue for some sort of "natural" cataclysm along those lines; perhaps only our hopes and dreams literally staving off the inevitable.

Moreover, through advances in science and technology we have laid the groundwork for an entirely new form of "life" to supplant us, humans, as the "kings and queens" of planet Earth.

And yet I'm not scared anymore about contemplating the future.

In the meantime, I continue to play the "estimation game"—throwing out numbers and guesses like one of the old-time kooks from my childhood, patiently collating them in rank of potentiality like a bookie.

Maybe, despite what I just wrote, I am *indeed* afraid of the future, and this is just my way to gain some sense of "control" over it. Or maybe that despite the periodic "dystopian" aspects/implications of the actual scientific and sociological articles I do read, there is a strange thread of "hope" that persists in the face of so many exponentially growing advancements.

We are on the edge of possibly one of the most amazing times to be alive in the history of humankind.

If we don't fuck it up.

Copyright 2018, Butterfly Language
www.butterflylanguage.com
matrixpraxis@gmail.com